

STRANGERS AND SOJOURNERS

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A SERMON
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“For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.”
Psalm 39:12

IF you read the whole verse, you will see that David used these words as an argument in prayer—“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” It is a grand thing to be able to argue with God in prayer. Faith grips the angel of the covenant, but it is by well-grounded arguments that we will wrestle with Him until we prevail. Expectancy puts in the wedge, but it is solid argument that drives it home.

When we want to obtain any mercy from the Lord, we must support our plea by reasons drawn from His nature, His promises, and the experiences of His children as recorded in His Word. Martin Luther was a great master of this holy art of arguing with God in prayer, as was the apostle Paul, and therefore, their supplications were not presented in vain.

Let it be so with you also, beloved—besiege the throne of grace with the most powerful arguments you can find in the heavenly armory. Lay hold upon the arm of omnipotence and say to the Lord, as wrestling Jacob did, “I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me.”

I. It is, however, the argument that David used, rather than the prayer that he presented, upon which I want to talk to you at this time. So first, I ask you to notice that DAVID WAS A STRANGER AND A SOJOURNER, AS ALL HIS FATHERS HAD BEEN BEFORE HIM.

A stranger is a person who is away from his home, and a sojourner is one who only stays in a certain place for a short time, and then must be up and away. Such is a true Christian. In what respects is he a stranger?

First, he is a stranger *in his position*. He is not in his native land—he is a freeman of the New Jerusalem. He sings,

*“I’m but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home;
Earth is a desert dreary,
Heaven is my home.*

*“Dangers and sorrows stand
Round me on every hand:
Heaven is my fatherland
Heaven is my home.”*

While we are here in the body, we are absent from our nearest and dearest relatives. You know how Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven.” Our Elder Brother has gone home before us to prepare the many mansions in His Father’s house for our eternal abiding place. Many of our brethren and sisters in Christ have already joined the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven.

’Tis true that we have many very dear relatives here, but they also are strangers here even as we are—pilgrims to the Celestial City that lies beyond the river. Our true possessions are not here. We own no property in this world. We have had certain things lent to us for use while we are here, and we have

to give an account of how we use them, but we must leave them all behind us when we go home. We brought nothing into this world and we can carry nothing out of it.

Our inheritance is above—an inheritance which is undefiled, and that fades not away—which we are to share with Christ, for we are joint-heirs of it with Him. Our treasure is where our heart is and both are now before the throne of God on high in the keeping of Christ—unto whom we have committed them until that day when we shall be with Him where He is and shall behold His glory. “Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

I know that there are tender associations connected with our earthly homes and loved ones, yet how often are the ashes of our family hearth quenched by the tears of grief while the black pall of mourning hangs over those who have been taken from us? Ah, no! this is not our home. Our native land, our true country is in the heavenly highlands where Jesus dwells, and we long for the time when He shall say to us, “Come up hither.” Then, but not till then, shall we be at home with the Lord.

Next, we are strangers, not only in position, but *in character*. When an Englishman crosses over to France, he is quickly recognized as a stranger and a foreigner, and a true Christian is not in any place long before it is discovered that he is of a different nationality from those by whom he is surrounded. His pedigree is not the same as that of worldlings—they are of their father the devil, and his works do they do, but he has been “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”

God is now his Father, for He has “begotten him again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” His manners, too, as well as his pedigree, are not like those of worldlings. If an Englishman goes to the Continent, and tries to pass himself off as a German or a Frenchman, he is soon detected. And in a similar fashion, a true Christian reveals the fact that he is an alien in this world—his ways and manners and customs are not those of the men of the world who have their portion in this life.

He has obeyed that great apostolic command, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” There is also something in a Christian’s speech which shows that he is a stranger in this world, he has a peculiar accent which the worldling cannot imitate. Even when a Christian speaks wrongly, he is speedily detected. Peter denied with an oath that he even knew Jesus of Nazareth, but those that stood by were not deceived by his swearing, for they said to him, “Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee.”

The reason of all this is because there is an essential difference between the nature of a Christian and the nature of a worldling—the worldling is of the earth, earthy. But the Christian is no longer a mere natural man, for he has had a higher and spiritual nature imparted to him. Indeed, he has been made a partaker of the divine nature.

The worldling seeks the things of the world, but the spiritual man seeks the things of the Spirit. That which came down from heaven returns back to heaven, and just as fire seeks the sun, the great central source of light and heat, so the new spirit within the Christian seeks God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and things eternal, heavenly, and divine.

I say again that there is an essential difference between the nature of a Christian and the nature of a worldling—you cannot make a true Christian into a worldling and you cannot make a worldling into a Christian. A natural man must be born again before he can become a Christian, and then he will not be the same man that he was before, but a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Further, being strangers in this world, *we must expect to be treated as strangers by the world*. Worldlings cannot understand us, just as the people in a foreign country cannot understand an Englishman who can only speak his native language. He is a stranger in a strange land and so is a Christian in this world.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was upon this earth, the great mass of the people could not comprehend Him—He was a stranger in the very world which He had made, and the world knows us not because it knew Him not—and the more we are like Him, the less will the world be able to comprehend us. The carnal mind knows not the things of the Spirit “because they are spiritually discerned.” We must not

marvel, therefore, beloved, if our motives are misconstrued, and our words wrested and twisted—and we are slandered and abused. We are like the pilgrims passing through Vanity Fair—and if we did not receive such treatment as they received, we might begin to suspect that we had become like the citizens of that country and were no longer pilgrims bound to Zion's city bound.

Further, *we are in our hearts strangers to the world*. Wherever a true Englishman wanders, his heart always turns towards his native land and he says—

“England with all your faults, I love thee still;”—

and when once again he sees the hoary cliffs of old Albion, his heart leaps within him, for he is glad to be back in the dear homeland. I have traveled through many lands and I can appreciate their beauties, but after all, “there's no place like home.”

So is it with the Christian. He has various interests and occupations here, and he seeks to be a blessing in the land where he is for a while a sojourner, but his heart is with Christ in heaven—and he can never be fully satisfied until he is there, too. An Englishman abroad is often hard to please. He thinks, sometimes very foolishly, that there is nothing as good as what he has in his fair island home, and a Christian *knows* that heavenly things are infinitely preferable to the things of earth. He has long since learned that there is nothing here to satisfy his immortal spirit, and his heart is always anticipating the time when he shall be at home with his Lord and find in Him all that his capacious soul can wish.

Certainly, brethren and sisters in Christ, *we ought to be strangers to the world in our conversation*. When we are in a foreign country, we are very cautious where we go, for we do not feel as safe as when we are in our own land, where we can ask our way and easily understand the directions given to us. When we try to bargain with the foreigners, we are not certain whether they are cheating us and certainly, the Christian in this world has many who are attempting to cheat him—not merely for time, but for eternity, too. That arch-roguer, the devil, is plotting against him every day, and all Satan's legions are constantly seeking to rob him of his holiness or of his peace of mind—or in some way or other to lead him astray.

So be on your guard, Christian, as you journey through this foreign land. You are in an enemy's country, a foe may be lurking behind every hedge, a fiery dart may be shot at you from every bush. Keep your sword unsheathed, ever have ready for use that two-edged “sword of the Spirit which is the word of God,” and hold as with a death-grip the great “shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

The great adversary of your soul will attack you just at the moment when you think yourself most secure, so “be sober, be vigilant”—ever obey your Master's command—“What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” Strangers in a foreign land should have their wits on the alert and Christians in this world should have their graces in active exercise. If they do not, they will bitterly regret their folly and sin.

Yet further, *we are strangers as to our supplies*. When we go on the Continent, we do not expect the people living there—the hotel-keepers, shop-keepers, and so on, to pay the cost of our traveling, board and lodging, and to buy for us anything that takes our fancy. No, we take with us as much money as we think we shall need, or drafts that we can cash at a foreign bank. And if we find that we have not sufficient, we send to England for more, for we are absolutely dependent upon our home supplies.

Just so is it in spiritual matters with the Christian—he knows that he must not look for a single lump of coal from earth's mines to keep alight the fire of his piety, but he must depend upon God for everything. Like the Israelites, he is in a waste howling wilderness that can yield him no supplies of corn—and his bread must drop from heaven day by day, or he will starve. He is in a desert unwatered by any river where he can quench his thirst, and all he has to drink must flow from the riven rock, Christ Jesus. Everything he has must come directly from his God. His eyes must always be lifted up to the hills, from whence comes his help—his help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth.

And to close this part of the subject, *the Christian is a stranger as to the short duration of his sojourn in this world*. Thank God, we are not to be here long. Though the days of our pilgrimage should be seventy, or eighty, or even ninety years, how swiftly they come to an end! No weaver's shuttle flies so fast as does the life of man—and the Christian who dies the soonest is all the earlier in heaven. The worker for Christ who gets his service finished first, receives his reward the sooner. [It is remarkable that this Sermon, taken in the regular order of the unpublished manuscripts, should be first available for reading on the last Sabbath in January, *just nineteen years after Mr. Spurgeon's home-going at Mentone, a little before midnight on January 31st, 1892*, at the age of fifty-seven. The Sermon intended for reading *that day*, #2241, A Stanza of Deliverance, was the second of the only two which the beloved preacher had been able to revise during his last long illness. The other one was #2237, Gratitude For Deliverance From The Grave]

Instead of dreading Death, and bidding him depart from us, we might rather beckon him to come for us. Come quickly, blessed messenger, to summon us to the presence of the King! Come, chariot of fire and horses of fire, and take the servant of the Lord to be forever with his gracious Master and Savior! Of course, I am saying all this in complete subservience to the will of God. He knows the best time and way to end our earthly service, and after all, it matters not when and how we go home to heaven. And if we “are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,” we “shall not prevent (or have any preference over) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

II. Now, secondly, notice that DAVID WAS A STRANGER WITH GOD—and so is the true Christian. The worldling is a stranger *to* God, but the true believer in Jesus is a stranger *with* God—and there is an eternal difference between the two.

What is the meaning of the sentence, “I am a stranger with thee”? I think it means, first, that *although we are strangers in the world, we are constantly under God's eye and care*. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open unto their cry.” Beloved, you are always under *God's discerning eye*. He searches you, and tries you, and sees if there is any wicked way in you—and leads you in the way everlasting.

You are all constantly under *God's protecting eye*. You know what He said of old concerning His vineyard—“I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” Further, you are continually under *God's directing eye*—“I will guide thee with mine eye.” You are also ever under *God's pitying eye*. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.”

You are, too, never absent from *God's providing eye*. One of the Lord's most precious names is JEHOVAH-Jireh, which means, “The Lord will see or provide.” And you are perpetually under *God's delighting eye*. He says to you, “Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah, for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.”

Further, that sentence means that, *although we are strangers in the world, we enjoy peculiar fellowship with God*. The apostle John says, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” We are not strangers *to* God, for, like Enoch, we walk with God in hallowed and intimate union and communion. He has told us some of His greatest secrets, for “the secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.”

He has given us the high privilege of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. He has brought us into His banqueting house and His banner over us has been love. And we have had such rapturous fellowship with Him that we understand what Paul meant when he said that he was “caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

The sentence “I am a stranger with thee,” also means that, *although we are strangers in the world, God is a stranger too*. It is passing strange, yet is it strangely true, that God is a stranger in His own

world. Here is His handiwork all around us, most fair and beautiful, yet the fool says in his heart, “There is no God,” and proves himself to be a fool by saying it. Here are signs on every hand of the working of God’s gracious providence—mysterious but wondrously wise—yet worldlings cannot see any traces of the finger or mind or heart of God, for He is a stranger to them. And as God is a stranger here, we need not marvel that we, who are His children, are also strangers on the earth—

*“Behold what wondrous grace
The Father hath bestowed
On sinners of a mortal race,
To call them sons of God!”*

*“’Tis no surprising thing
That we should be unknown:
The Jewish world knew not their King,
God’s everlasting Son.”*

I think I see my gracious Lord and Master wandering through this world as a stranger, “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief—spit upon, scourged, hounded out from among men, and at last crucified “without the gate.” Then, when we “go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach,” we are strangers with Him and what higher honor than that can any of us ever desire? “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.”

There is another thought that I must not leave out. It is this. *Though we are strangers in the world, we are with Christ all the while.* Where is the true Christian’s life? Paul answers the question in writing to the Colossians—“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

Christ is the Christian’s All-in-All, so what can there be belonging to the Christian that is left here on earth? Why, nothing at all that need trouble us for a moment, for “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Representatively, we are in heaven even now—and where our Head is, there will all the members of His mystical body be gathered in due time.

III. Now, lastly, IF WE ARE STRANGERS AND SOJOURNERS HERE, WHAT THEN?

First, *it is clear that we must have a home somewhere.* “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests,” and shall the immortal spirit of man have no home? God forbid! We could not be called strangers and sojourners unless we had a native land somewhere. A man who is an alien in one country is a citizen of another, so we, who are strangers and sojourners here, are citizens of a better country, even a heavenly.—

*“There is a happy land,
Far, far away,”—*

which is my true home, and there, in God’s good time, I know that I shall be—

*“No more a stranger or a guest,
But like a child at home.”*

Do you think God would make us so dissatisfied with this world if He did not mean to satisfy us with another and a better one? Surely not. The very fact that we are strangers and sojourners upon the

earth proves that we have a country of our own that is very different from this wilderness-world through which we are passing.

This being the case, *it is not surprising that we sometimes long to get home*. We ought not to long for heaven from any lazy motives. A good workman may be so tired with heavy toil that he eagerly looks forward to Saturday night so that he may enjoy his Sabbath rest and renew his strength for fresh service on the morrow.

And you and I, beloved, though we are not tired *of* our Master's work, are often tired *in* it, and we shall be glad when our rest day comes. Thank God, it is not to be six days' work, and then one day's rest, but it is to be a rest that shall know no end—a rest in untiring service. "There remaineth therefore a rest (a *Sabbatismos*, an eternal keeping of Sabbath) to the people of God."

I said that it is not surprising that we sometimes long to get home. You would not think that a boy loved his home if he never longed for the holidays to come. I recollect that, when I was at boarding-school, I made an Almanac with a square for every day and I blotted out each one as it went by—and sometimes I blotted it out the night before so that I might seem to have fewer days at school. And Christian, you, also, may rejoice as the days of your school training here pass, for, as each one flits by, you are "a day's march nearer home."—

*"Though in a foreign land
We are not far from home;
And nearer to our home above
We every moment come."*

Do you not also think, dear friends, that *the fact that we are strangers here should make us treat one another well*? And surely, if the worldling knew Christians better, he would treat them better. They are strangers to you, man, but they are God's strangers. They are royal personages *incognito*, princes of the blood imperial travelling through this world to their wondrous palaces above.

But let us who are fellow-pilgrims and strangers help one another all we can. If you are in Switzerland or up the Rhine, and have got into some difficulty or trouble, if you see an Englishman coming, you feel pretty sure that your fellow-countryman will do what he can to help you. It should be so with Christians.

We are strangers in this world, so let us aid one another all we can. We are soldiers in an enemy's country, so back to back and shoulder to shoulder let us face the foes that are all around us. Though we are strangers to the world, we are not strangers to God, so let us not be strangers to one another, but let us be of one heart and mind, walking in love, even as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us.

Then, next, *surely we ought never to envy the lot of sinners*. I never grudge horses their corn or the swine their husks and hog-wash, then why should I envy sinners? I remember David's words, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb."

When a friend once gave Martin Luther a large sum of money, he stood at the church door and gave it all away to the poor, because he said that he had made up his mind to have his portion in the next world and not in this. There is nothing in the sinner's lot, either here or hereafter, that you and I have any cause to envy.

And *let us never murmur at our own lot*.

*"The road may be rough, but it cannot be long;
So let's smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song."*

There are you, my poor brother or sister, fretting about what you will do in six months' time, worrying about the rent, the fire, the food, the clothing, and I know not what. Yet, it may be that before

even this year ends, your head may be wearing the crown and your fingers sweeping the golden harp strings, and you yourself,—

*“Far from this world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”*

And if you are still here for a while, the Lord will provide for you—so cast all your care upon Him who cares for you.

So, lastly, *what an easy thing it should be for a Christian to die!* He is a stranger with God even here, but he will be with God, and not as a stranger up there. He has been with God in life, and God will be with him in death.

*“Strangers into life we come,
And dying is but going home.”*

But going home is not hard work, going home is not a thing to be dreaded—rather should we sing in joyous anticipation of it, as so many of our dear brethren and sisters have done when they have actually reached the hour of their home-going.

Yet, alas! there are some here who may well dread *their* home-going, for they are strangers *to* God, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” O soul, if that is your condition, do not remain a stranger to God a moment longer! Repent of your sin and trust God to forgive it for Jesus sake. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” And then, though you will be a stranger here, you will not be stranger up there where He is. God bless you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 39

This Psalm gives a description of David’s experience and conduct when stretched upon a sickbed. He appears to have felt impatience working within him, which I am sorry to say is a very common disease with most of us when God’s hand is heavy upon us. Yet David struggled against his impatience. Though he felt it, he would not show it, lest he should thereby open the mouths of his enemies and cause them to speak evil of his God. Let us imitate his restraint if we resemble him in the temptation to impatience.

Verse 1. *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue:*

This government of the tongue is a most important part of our ways. It is a very essential part of holy discipline, yet we have heard of one saint who said that he had lived for seventy years and had tried to control his tongue, but that he had only begun to understand the art when he died. David said, “I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue;”

1. *I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked are before me.*

They have such quick ears and they are so ready to misinterpret and misrepresent our words—and if they can find one word awry, they will straightway preach a long sermon over it, so let us muzzle our mouths while they are near. The ill words of Christians often make texts for sinners, and thus God is blasphemed out of the mouths of His own beloved children. Let it not be so with any of you, beloved.

2. *I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.*

We all know that unless our grief can find expression, it swells and grows till our heart is ready to break. We have heard of a wise physician who bade a man in great trouble weep as much as ever he could. “Do not restrain your grief,” he said, “but let it all out.” He felt that only in that way would the poor sufferer’s heart be kept from breaking. David determined that before the wicked, he would have nothing at all to say, and though his griefs were surging within him, yet for a time he kept them from bursting out.

3. *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing, the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue.*

He could not hold his peace any longer—it would have been well if he had done so, for he uttered an unwise prayer when he spake with his tongue.

4. *LORD, make me to know mine end,*

That is what you and I are apt to say when we get into a little trouble—we want to die and get away from it all. We say that we long to be with Christ, but I am afraid that it is often only a lazy wish to share the spoils of victory without fighting the battle, to receive the saints' wages without doing the saints' work, and to enter into heaven without the toils and dangers of the pilgrims' way.

Perhaps this has been the case with us sometimes when we have thought that our aspirations were of the best and holiest kind. When David prayed, "LORD, make me to know mine end," his prayer was not a very wise one, but the next sentences were not quite as foolish.—

4. *And the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.*

Oh! that we could all know how frail we are! But we reckon upon living for years when we have scarcely any more minutes left. We think our life's hour-glass is full when the sands have almost run out. And although the hand of God's great clock may be upon the striking-point, we think our brief hour has but just begun.

5. *Behold, thou have made my days as an handbreadth:*

This is a very common measure, the breadth of the human hand—and David says that this span is the measure of his life. Some here must surely have spent a great part of that handbreadth—let them and all of us be prepared to meet our God when that short span's limit is reached.

5. *And mine age is as nothing before thee:*

It is an incalculably tiny speck when compared with the immeasurable ages of the Eternal. "Mine age is as nothing before thee." When Alcibiades boasted of his great estates, the philosopher brought him a map of the world and said to him, "Can you find your estates on this map?" Even Athens itself was but as a pin's point. Where, then, were the estates of Alcibiades? Nowhere to be seen. So when we see the great map of eternity spread out before us, where is the whole of this world's history? It is but a speck. And where, then, are your life and mine? They are as nothing before God.

5. *Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.*

Then what must he be at his worst state?

6. *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain.* [See Sermon #2346, Earth's Vanities and Heaven's Verities]

They fret, and fume, and flurry, and worry—and all about what? About nothing. We sometimes say, "It will be all the same a hundred years hence." Ah! but it will be all the same much sooner than that, when the six feet of earth shall be all our heritage.

6. *He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*

"Do you think," says an old writer, "every time you lock up your money in a box, how soon death shall lock you up in your coffin?" Some men seem to be like our children's money-boxes, into which money is put, but they must be broken before any can come out. To some men, how sad must be the thought that they have been accumulating wealth all their days, and they know not for whom they have been gathering it! A stranger may, perhaps, inherit it—or if their own kith and kin shall get it, they may squander it just as thoroughly as the misers hoarded it.

7. *And now, Lord,—*

If all earthly things are nothing but emptiness,—

7. *What wait I for?*

"I wait for nothing here, for there is nothing here to wait for."

7. *My hope is in thee.*

Ah! this hope makes life worth living. Now that we hope in God. Now that we know that there remains another and a better world than this world of shadows, life is invested with true solemnity.

8-9. *Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.*

It is always a blessed reason for resignation when we can say of any bereavement or affliction, “The Lord has done it.” Shall He not do as He wills with His own? Then let us say with Job, “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

10-12. *Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*

Tears have ever had great prevalence with God. Christ used these sacred weapons when, “with strong crying and tears,” He prayed to His Father in Gethsemane, “and was heard in that he feared.” Sinner, there is such potency in a penitent’s tears that you may prevail with God if you will come to Him weeping over your sin and pleading the precious blood of Christ. Your tears cannot merit heaven or wash away your sins, but if you do penitently grieve over them, and trust in the great atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, your tearful prayers shall have a gracious answer of peace.

Mr. Bunyan describes the City of Mansoul as sending Mr. Wet-Eyes as one of her ambassadors to the Prince Emmanuel—and he is still a most acceptable ambassador to the King of kings. He who knows how to weep his heart out at the foot of the cross shall not be long without finding mercy. Tears are diamonds that God loves to behold.

12. *For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*

“I am not a stranger *to* You, O my God! Blessed be Your holy name, I know You well, but ‘I am a stranger *with* thee.’ You are a stranger in Your own world, and so am I. The world knows You not, and the world knows me not. And when I act as You act, the world hates me even as it hates You.”

13. *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.